

THE
DYING NEGRO,
A
POEM.



*To you this unpolluted blood I pour.
To you that Spirit which ye gave restore!*

A NEW EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.

L O N D O N:

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A P O E M.



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 the heart which is our own



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Published by J. B. Roberts, 150 N. D. St.,
 in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and J. Roberts, in New Bond Street,
 London.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following POEM was occasioned by a fact which had recently happened at the time of its first publication, in 1773. A Negro, belonging to the Captain of a West-Indiaman, having agreed to marry a white woman, his fellow-servant, in order to effect his purpose, had left his master's house, and procured himself to be baptized; but being detected and taken, he was sent on board the Captain's vessel then lying in the River; where, finding no chance of escaping, and preferring death to another voyage to America, he took an opportunity of shooting himself. As soon as his determination is fixed, he is supposed to write this Epistle to his intended wife.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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D E D I C A T I O N.

HAVING been, through indignation, betrayed into the dangerous character of an Author, I sought, among the professed philosophers of the eighteenth century, one whose name I might consistently prefix to an assertion of the rights of nature, and who would not blush at the homage of an unknown and unambitious bard. But I found that modern Philosophy herself participated of the refinement of modern manners : she has forgotten that she once inhabited the lowly cot of Socrates, and shared the frugal meals of Epaminondas ; she no longer numbers in her train Senators and Generals, who descending from seats of magistracy, or cars of triumph, did not disdain to cultivate with their victorious arms that earth which they had defended with their blood. Her votaries are not now those stubborn souls who defied the tyrant on his throne, or in his death vindicated the rights of their country and of mankind. Nor are the rugged manners of Cato and Brutus, now formidable to usurpers ; nor do the harsh principles of Diogenes suffuse a momentary blush upon

the cheek of monarchy. Modern Philosophy, like modern Honor, has chosen her residence in courts and palaces. There we find her favoured votaries prostrate at the foot of thrones, and kissing the sacred dust. If she speaks, it is to join her whispers to the thunders of prerogative, and to teach the subject world, that neither the will of Heaven, nor of Heaven-descended Kings, must be opposed.

Little qualified to sacrifice at the altars of, this new divinity, I dared not implore the patronage of its ministers and priests; still less did I find myself disposed to invoke those literati of the Continent, who are enemies to princes, yet stoop to flatter their minions and sycophants; moralists, yet men of pleasure; philosophers, yet foes to natural religion; sceptics, yet dogmatical; and who, while they profess disinterestedness and independence, lead the venal muses to voluntary prostitution. Yet I found one man, whose matchless eloquence is less admirable than the fortitude with which he has developed the principles, and defended the rights of human nature; whose virtue is as unequalled as his genius, and whose life is a nobler pattern of imitation than his writings; who, rejecting the supercilious bounty of the vain, yet un pitying and ungenerous, Great; exerts a painful industry amidst the evils and infirmities of old age, and prefers exile, poverty, and obscurity, to all the riches and the honors which ambitious meannesses extorts from Kings.—After this portrait is it necessary to subscribe a name, and to acknowledge, that I dedicate this poem to JEAN JACQUES ROSSEAU?

It is probable that this tribute to your virtues may never reach your ears, and that the following lines, like the occasion of them, will soon

soon be consigned to oblivion. Yet on this first, and probably last occasion, in which I shall obtrude my sentiments upon the world, I may be excused, if I inscribe a piece, whose only merit is the humanity and freedom of its sentiments, to that man, from whose writings I have principally derived them. Happy should I esteem myself could these feeble efforts once more awaken that irresistible eloquence, which was never prostituted to falshood, or denied to truth; those talents of reasoning and investigation, which can never fail to convince the mind, that is not debased by voluntary and incorrigible error; and that virtuous enthusiasm, which seems inspired by Heaven itself for the instruction of its creatures. How should I rejoice to see a cause like this rescued from my weak pen; to see the rights of humanity vindicated by him, who most intimately feels their force, and is most capable of expressing what he feels; to see that insolence, that successful avarice confounded, which, under the mask of commerce, has already ravaged the two extremities of the globe!— Astonish and instruct posterity by the dreadful spectacle of human crimes; and while you represent in one quarter of the world a band of insatiable wretches, spreading unprovoked desolation over its most beautiful regions; massacring the Bramin in the midst of his uncontaminated feasts, and staining with blood the purest altars of the Deity; let the other exhibit a race of Christian merchants, daily trafficking for hecatombs of their fellow-creatures in a lot; exhausting *Africa* to supply with slaves the countries they have depopulated in *America* *; and annually reducing millions to a state of misery still more dreadful than death itself.—Should there be room for

* In the single Island of *Jamaica* above 60,000 of the natives are computed to have been cruelly discriminated by the first European settlers there.

scenes less striking, though equally instructive and important, let your enchanting pencil exhibit a nation renowned for arts and arms; let the surrounding ocean be covered with her fleets; and let her boast an inflexible sternness, and an unconquerable valour. Paint a savage and gloomy liberty exulting amidst the shock of foreign invasions and domestic tumults: let her wield a bloody ax, and trample alike on the mitre and the diadem: let superstition and civil war conspire to exalt her, until she has triumphed over opposition, and erected a temple, whose foundations appear durable, as the world itself. Beneath a milder sky let peace introduce the genius and arts which adorned the states of Athens and of Rome, without insuring their duration: let gentler manners, and a less ferocious dignity succeed; let philosophy and science glory in a race of illustrious disciples, whose labours may dispel the gloom of fanaticism, and teach mankind whatever the Almighty has permitted them to know.—Here, while the delighted eye of presumption gazes with capture, and pronounces the tablet perfect and eternal,—reverse the scene, and inscribe the mortifying lesson of human imbecility. Introduce commerce and prosperity spreading over the land, and enervating the minds of men with a secret, but swift infection. Let avarice and sensuality succeed to honor; faction and servitude invade the asylum of liberty; and manly reason, like a fettered lion, be dragged in triumph by fashion and caprice.—Such are the scenes I would present to my countrymen, could I boast an eloquence like your's, to explain the eternal principles which providence has decreed, shall influence the fate of nations; the causes which exalt them to security and dominion, or plunge them into that abyss of baseness and corruption, from whence they can no more emerge: such are the lessons, for which you have both proscribed and persecuted

persecuted by a world which you have enlightened. Yet has not the ingratitude of mankind ever tainted your philanthropy. You have taught us, that the sublime maxims of philosophy are not always confined to indolent speculation; you have shewn that a stoical severity is not always inconsistent with a feeling heart; and that the simplicity of ignorance is compatible with the most exalted genius.

The trifle now inscribed with your name, was occasioned by a particular fact; but to the disgrace of human nature, the subject is sufficiently general to interest every heart not totally impenetrable. We boast of the gentleness of our manners, and think the rugged virtues of antiquity ill-adapted to the genius of the present times. When you ask if Brutus sold his country, or the Spartan matrons frequented assemblies of nocturnal riot, it is thought a sufficient answer to say, that we do not expose our children, or whip them at the altar of Diana, and that this is the age of generous sentiment, and refined humanity. I will not compare the education of an ancient Spartan with that of a British nobleman. Let eunuchs and *figurants*, those respectable guardians of modern discipline, insult the memory of Lycurgus; and fellows of colleges establish their monkish institutions on the ruin of the Lyceum. Let the present age enjoy the boldest panegyrics its admirers can bestow. But if our boasted improvements, and frivolous politeness, be well acquired by the loss of manly firmness and independence, if in order to feel as men it be necessary to

For tho' I fly to 'scape from fortune's rage,

And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,

Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,

Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn:

For virtue lost, and ruin'd man, I mourn.

adopt the manners of women, let us at least be consistent, nor mingle the excesses of barbarism with the weaknesses of civilization. There are certain forms in which vice appears not only monstrous, but ridiculous; the cruelty of Nero is more disgusting than that of Tiberius. When a benevolent mind contemplates the republic of Lycurgus, its admiration is mixed with a degree of horror. We behold a band of determined patriots, irresistible in war, and inflexible in peace; souls to which the severity of virtue was more engaging than its enjoyments; and who seemed to court the dangers of combat, only that they might refuse the rewards of victory. Yet this admirable republic is tainted by atrocities, which tarnish the lustre of its sublime institutions. When we reflect that to form a small society of heroes, a much greater number of men sunk below the rank of brutes; when we consider the unfortunate *Helotes*, abused, insulted, and enslaved; we less admire the exaltation of one part of our species, than we execrate the degradation of another: heroism becomes displeasing at such a price, and we prefer the calm of mediocrity to the terrors of so stormy an excellence. But let us not too hastily triumph in the shame of Sparta, lest we aggravate our own condemnation. Let us remember, there is a people who share the government and name of Britons; among whom the cruelty of Sparta is renewed without its virtue. It was some excuse for the disciples of Lycurgus, that if one man had been created by Heaven to obey another, the citizens he had formed best deserved the empire of the world. But what has *America* to boast? What are the graces or the virtues which distinguish its inhabitants? What are *their* triumphs in war, or their inventions in peace? Inglorious soldiers, yet seditious citizens; fordid merchants, and indolent usurpers; behold the men, whose avarice

rice has been more fatal to the interests of humanity, and has more desolated the world than the ambition of its antient Conquerors! For them the Negro is dragged from his cottage, and his plantane shade*;—by them the fury of African tyrants is stimulated by pernicious gold; the rights of nature are invaded; and European faith becomes infamous throughout the globe. Yet, such is the inconsistency of mankind! these are the men whose clamours for liberty and independence are heard across the Atlantic Ocean! Murmurings and rebellions are the first fruits of their gratitude, and thus America recompences Europe for the protection she has bestowed.—But are the hopes and fortunes of the species indeed fallen so low, that freedom will desert that country, whose warriors and philosophers have so often conspired to defend her, to seek an asylum in the forests of America?—Much as an impartial observer may find to blame in Britain, her colonies, I fear, are not more acceptable to Providence.—Let the wild inconsistent claims of America prevail, when they shall be unmixed with the clank of chains, and the groans of anguish. Let her aim a dagger at the breast of her milder parent, if she can advance a step without trampling on the dead and dying carcases of her slaves:—But let her remember, that it is in Britain alone, that laws are equally favourable to liberty and humanity; that it is in Britain the sacred rights of nature have received their most awful ratification.—Could I flatter myself that I might contribute to such a cause, or interest the generous minds of my countrymen to extend an ampler protection to the most innocent and mise-

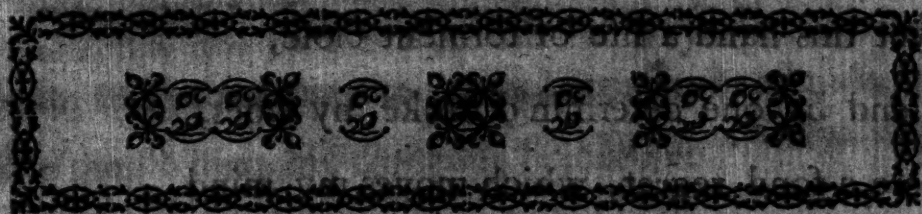
* These observations are by no means to be confined to the West Indies. “The number of Negroes in the Southern Colonies of North America is equal, if not superior, to that of the white men—Their condition is truly pitiable; their labour excessively hard, their diet poor and scanty, their treatment cruel and oppressive. They cannot but be a subject of terror to those who so inhumanly tyrannize over them.” *Burnaby's Travels thro' N. America in 1760.*

table of their own species, I should congratulate myself that I had not lived in vain.—For the rest, I trust, that the motive of the writer will, in your eyes, atone for his defects, and that you will allow him the only merit he assumes, truth and sincerity, when he subscribes himself a friend to human nature; and consequently,

YOUR FRIEND and ADMIRER.

and European from various nations, and the most of the
 claims for liberty and independence are heard across the Atlantic
 Ocean. Manners and rebellion are the first fruits of their
 trade, and the African continent is Europe for the growing
 has followed—The hope and fortune of the world is
 fallen to low, that history will depict that country, whose warriors
 and philosophers have so often contended to defend their
 and in the face of a world—Which is an impartial observer
 may find to blame in Britain, but could not find in
 acceptable to America.—But the wild insurrection of
 America prevails, when they shall be united with the spirit of change
 and the growth of a nation, but let him a moment's breath of
 her suffer, if he can, it is a matter of course, that
 dead and dying evidence of her slaves—That is the number, that
 it is in Britain alone, that have no equally favourable to liberty and
 humanity, that is in Britain the sacred rights of nature have received
 their most awful restriction.—Good! I thank myself that I might
 continue to such a cause, or interest the generous mind of my coun-
 tryman to extend an angle protection to the most innocent and milde-

"These observations may be so taken to be confined to the West India
 "Negroes in the Southern Colonies of North America, but it is not so, for the
 "same men—Their condition is truly pitiable, and the same principles apply to their
 "condition, their treatment cruel and oppressive. The same spirit of error is
 "seen who so indignantly reprobates over them." **N A**



E P I S T L E, &c.

ARM'D with thy sad last gift---the pow'r to die,
Thy shafts, stern fortune, now I can defy;
Thy dreadful mercy points at length the shore,
Where all is peace, and men are slaves no more;
---This weapon, ev'n in chains, the brave can wield,
And vanquish'd quit triumphantly the field:
---Beneath such wrongs let pallid Christians live,
Such they can perpetrate, and may forgive.

Yet while I tread that gulph's tremendous brink,
Where nature shudders, and where beings sink,

B

Ere

Ere yet this hand a life of torment close,
 And end by one determin'd stroke my woes,
 Is there a fond regret, which moves my mind
 To pause, and cast a ling'ring look behind?
 ---O my lov'd bride!---for I have call'd thee mine,
 Dearer than life, whom I with life resign,
 For thee ev'n here this faithful heart shall glow,
 A pang shall rend me, and a tear shall flow.---
 How shall I soothe thy grief, since fate denies
 Thy pious duties to my closing eyes?
 I cannot clasp thee in a last embrace,
 Nor gaze in silent anguish on thy face;
 I cannot raise these fetter'd arms for thee,
 To ask that mercy heav'n denies to me;
 Yet let thy tender breast my sorrows share,
 Bleed for my wounds, and feel my deep despair.
 Yet let thy tears bedew a wretch's grave,
 Whom Fate forbade thy tenderness to save.
 Receive these sighs---to thee my soul I breathe---
 Fond love in dying groans is all I can bequeathe.

Why

Why did I, slave, beyond my lot aspire?
 Why didst thou fan the inauspicious fire?
 For thee I bade my drooping soul revive;
 For thee alone I could have borne to live;
 And love, I said, shall make me large amends,
 For persecuting foes, and faithless friends:
 Fool that I was! enur'd so long to pain,
 To trust to hope, or dream of joy again.
 Joy, stranger guest, my easy faith betray'd,
 And love now points to death's eternal shade;
 There while I rest from mis'ry's galling load,
 Be thou the care of ev'ry pitying God;
 Nor may that Dæmon's unpropitious pow'r,
 Who shed his influence on my natal hour,
 Pursue thee too with unrelenting hate,
 And blend with mine the colour of thy fate.
 For thee may those soft hours return again,
 When pleasure led thee smiling o'er the plain.
 Ere, like some hell-born spectre of dismay,
 I cross'd thy path, and darken'd all the way.

Ye waving groves, which from this dell I view
 Ye meads now glitt'ring with the morning dew
 Ye flowers, which blush on yonder hated shore,
 That at my baneful step shall fade no more,
 A long farewell!—I ask no vernal bloom
 No pageant wreaths to wither on my tomb.
 ---Let serpents hiss and nightshade blacken there,
 To mark the friendless victim of despair!

And better in th' untimely grave to rot,
 The world and all its cruelties forgot,
 Than, dragg'd once more beyond the Western main,
 To groan beneath some dastard planter's chain,
 Where my poor countrymen in bondage wait
 The slow enfranchisement of ling'ring fate.
 Oh! my heart sinks, my dying eyes o'erflow,
 When mem'ry paints the picture of their woe!
 For I have seen them, e'er the dawn of day,
 Rouz'd by the lash, begin their chearless way;
 Greeting with groans unwelcome morn's return,
 While rage and shame their gloomy bosoms burn;

And,

And, chiding ev'ry hour the slow-pac'd sun,
 Endure their toils 'till all his race was run;
 No eye to mark their suff'rings with a tear,
 No friend to comfort, and no hope to cheer;
 Then like the dull unpitied brutes repair
 To stalls as wretched, and as coarse a fare;
 Thank heav'n one day of misery was o'er,
 And sink to sleep, and wish to wake no more.
 Sleep on! ye lost companions of my woes,
 For whom in death this tear of pity flows;
 Sleep, and enjoy the only boon of heav'n
 To you in common with your tyrants giv'n!
 O while soft slumber from their couches flies,
 Still may the balmy blessing steep your eyes;
 In swift oblivion lull awhile your woes,
 And brightest visions gladden the repose!
 Let fancy then, unconscious of the change,
 Thro' our own fields and native forests range;
 Waft ye to each once-haunted stream and grove,
 And visit ev'ry long-lost scene ye love!
 C I sleep

---I sleep no more--nor in the midnight shade,
 Invoke ideal phantoms to my aid;
 Nor wake again abandon'd and forlorn,
 To find each dear delusion fled at morn;
 A slow consuming death let others wait,
 I snatch destruction from unwilling fate!
 Yon ruddy streaks the rising sun proclaim,
 That never more shall beam upon my flame;
 Bright orb! for others let thy glory shine,
 Mature the golden grain and purple vine,
 While fetter'd Afric still for Europe toils,
 And Nature's plunders riot on her spoils;
 Be theirs the gifts thy partial rays supply,
 Be mine the gloomy privilege to die.

And thou, whose impious avarice and pride
 The holy Cross to my sad brows deny'd,
 Forbade me Nature's common rights to claim,
 Or share with thee a Christian's sacred name;
 Thou too farewell!--for not beyond the grave
 Extends thy pow'r, nor is my dust thy slave.

In vain Heav'n spread so wide the swelling sea,
 Vast wat'ry barrier, 'twixt thy world and me;
 Swift round the globe, by earth nor Heav'n controul'd
 Fly stern oppression, and dire lust of gold.
 Where-e'er the hell-hounds mark their bloody way,
 Still Nature groans, and man becomes their prey.
 In the wild wastes of Afric's sandy plain,
 Where roars the lion thro' his drear domain,
 To curb the savage monarch in the chase,
 There too Heav'n planted Man's majestic race;
 Bade reason's sons with nobler titles rise,
 Lift high their brow sublime, and scan the skies.
 What tho' the sun in his meridian blaze
 Dart on their naked limbs his scorching rays?
 What tho' no rosy tints adorn their face,
 No silken tresses shine with flowing grace;
 Yet of ethereal temper are their souls,
 And in their veins the tide of honour rolls;
 And valour kindles there the hero's flame,
 Contempt of death, and thirst of martial fame;

And

And pity melts the sympathizing breast,

Ah! fatal virtue for the brave distressed.

My tortur'd bosom, sad remembrance spare!

Why dost thou plant thy keenest daggers there?

And shew me what I was, and aggravate despair?

Ye streams of Gambia, and thou sacred shade!

Where in my youth's first dawn I joyful stray'd,

Oft have I rous'd, amid your caverns dim,

The howling tyger, and the lion grim;

In vain they gloried in their headlong force,

My jav'lin pierc'd them in their raging course.

But little did my boding mind bewray,

The victor and his hopes were doom'd a prey

To human brutes more fell, more cruel far than they.

Ah! what avails the conqueror's bloody meed,

The gen'rous purpose, or the dauntless deed?

This hapless breast expos'd on ev'ry plain,

And liberty prefer'd to life in vain?

Fall'n

Fall'n are my trophies, blasted is my fame,
 Myself become a thing without a name,
 The sport of haughty lords, and ev'n of slaves the shame.

Curst be the winds, and curst the tides which bore
 These European robbers to our shore !
 O be that hour involv'd in endless night,
 When first their streamers met my wond'ring sight !
 I call'd the warriors from the mountain's steep,
 To meet these unknown terrors of the deep ;
 Rouz'd by my voice, their gen'rous bosoms glow,
 They rush indignant, and demand the foe,
 And poize the darts of death, and twang the bended bow :
 When lo ! advancing o'er the sea-beat plain,
 I mark'd the leader of a warlike train.
 Unlike his features to our swarthy race ;
 And golden hair play'd round his ruddy face.
 While with insidious smile and lifted hand,
 He thus accosts our unsuspecting band.

D

“ Ye

" Ye valiant chiefs, whom love of glory leads
 " To martial combats, and heroic deeds;
 " No fierce invader your retreat explores,
 " No hostile banner waves along your shores.
 " From the dread tempests of the deep we fly,
 " Then lay, ye chiefs, these pointed terrors by :
 " And O, your hospitable cares extend,
 " So may ye never need the aid ^{ye} ~~we~~ lend !
 " So may ye still repeat to ev'ry grove
 " The songs of freedom, and the strains of love ! "

Soft as the accents of the traitor flow,
 We melt with pity, and unbend the bow ;
 With lib'ral hand our choicest gifts ^{we} ~~ye~~ bring,
 And point the wand'ers to the freshest spring.
 Nine days we feasted on the Gambian strand,
 And songs of friendship echo'd o'er the land *.

When

* Which way soever I turned my eyes on this spot, I beheld a perfect image
 of pure nature, an agreeable solitude bounded on every side by charming land-
 scapes; the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; the ease and
 indolence of the Negroes, reclined under the shade of their spreading foliage;
 the

When the tenth morn her rising lustre gave,
 The chief approach'd me by the founding wave.
 " O, youth," he said, " what gifts can we bestow,
 " Or how requite the mighty debt we owe?
 " For lo ! propitious to our vows, the gale
 " With milder omens fills the swelling sail.
 " To-morrow's sun shall see our ships explore
 " These deeps, and quit your hospitable shore.
 " Yet while we linger, let us still employ
 " The number'd hours in friendship and in joy ;
 " Ascend our ships, their treasures are your own,
 " And taste the produce of a world unknown."

He spoke ; with fatal eagerness we burn,---
 And quit the shores, undestin'd to return !
 The smiling traitors with insidious care,
 The goblet proffer, and the feast prepare,

the simplicity of their dress and manners ; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state. They are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable, and obliging.

M. Adanson's Voyage to Senegal, &c.

Till

"Till dark oblivion shades our closing eyes,
 And all disarm'd each fainting warrior lies,
 O wretches! to your future evils blind!
 O morn for ever present to my mind!
 When bursting from the treach'rous bands of sleep,
 Rouz'd by the murmurs of the dashing deep,
 I woke to bondage and ignoble pains,
 And all the horrors of a life in chains*.
 Ye Gods of Afric! in that dreadful hour
 Where were your thunders and avenging pow'r!

* "As we passed along the coast, we very often lay before a town, and fired a gun for the natives to come off, but no soul came near us. At length we learned by some ships that were trading down the coast, that the natives came seldom on board an English ship, for fear of being detained or carried off; yet at last some ventured on board; but if these chanced to spy any arms, they would all immediately take to their canoes, and make the best of their way home."

Smith's Voyage to Guinea.

"It is well known that many of the European nations have, very unjustly and inhumanly, without any provocation, stolen away, from time to time, abundance of the people, not only on this coast, but almost every where in Guinea, who have come on board their ships, in a harmless and confiding manner; these they have in great numbers carried away, and sold in the plantations."

J. Barbot's Description of Guinea.

Did

Did not my pray'rs, my groans, my tears invoke
 Your flumb'ring justice to direct the stroke?
 No pow'r descended to assist the brave,
 No light'nings flash'd, and I became a slave.
 From lord to lord my wretched carcase sold,
 In Christian traffic, for their sordid gold:
 Fate's blackest clouds were gather'd o'er my head;
 And, bursting now, they mix me with the dead.

Yet when my fortune cast my lot with thine,
 And bade beneath one roof our labours join,
 Surpriz'd I felt the tumults of my breast
 Lull'd by thy beauties to unwonted rest.
 Delusive hopes my changing soul enflame,
 And gentler transports agitate my frame.
 What tho' obscure thy birth, superior grace
 Shone in the glowing features of thy face.
 Ne'er had my youth such winning softness seen,
 Where Afric's sable beauties dance the green,

E

When

When some sweet maid receives her lover's vow,
 And binds the offer'd chaplet to her brow.
 While on thy languid eyes I fondly gaze,
 And trembling meet the lustre of their rays,
 Thou, gentle virgin, thou didst not despise
 The humble homage of a captive's sighs.
 By heav'n abandon'd, and by man betray'd,
 Each hope resign'd of comfort or of aid,
 Thy gen'rous love could ev'ry sorrow end,
 In thee I found a mistress and a friend;
 Still as I told the story of my woes,
 With heaving sighs thy lovely bosom rose;
 The trickling drops of liquid crystal stole
 Down thy fair cheek, and mark'd thy pitying soul:
 Dear drops! upon my bleeding heart, like balm
 They fell, and soon my tortur'd mind grew calm;
 Then my lov'd country, parents, friends forgot;
 Heav'n I absolv'd, nor murmur'd at my lot;
 Thy sacred smiles could ev'ry pang remove,
 And liberty became less dear than love.

—And

---And I have lov'd thee with as pure a fire,
 As man e'er felt, or woman could inspire :
 No pangs like these my pallid tyrants know,
 Not such their transports, and not such their woe.
 Their softer frames a feeble soul conceal,
 A soul unus'd to pity or to feel ;
 Damp'd by base lucre, and repell'd by fear,
 Each nobler passion faintly blazes here.
 Not such the mortals burning Afric breeds,
 Mother of virtues and heroic deeds !
 Descended from yon radiant orb, they claim
 Sublimer courage, and a fiercer flame.
 Nature has there, unchill'd by art, impress'd
 Her awful majesty on ev'ry breast.
 Where'er she leads, impatient of controul,
 The dauntless Negro rushes to the goal ;
 Firm in his love, resistless in his hate,
 His arm is conquest, and his frown is fate.

What

What fond affection in my bosom reigns!
 What soft emotions mingle with my pains!
 Still as thy form before my mind appears,
 My haggard eyes are bath'd in gushing tears;
 Thy lov'd idea rushes to my heart,
 And stern despair suspends the lifted dart—
 O could I burst these fetters which restrain
 My struggling limbs, and waft thee o'er the main,
 To some far distant shore, where Ocean roars
 In horrid tempests round the gloomy shores;
 To some wild mountain's solitary shade,
 Where never European faith betray'd;
 How joyful could I, of thy love secure,
 Meet ev'ry danger, ev'ry toil endure!
 For thee I'd climb the rock, explore the flood,
 And tame the famish'd savage of the wood;
 When scorching summer drinks the shrinking streams,
 My care should screen thee from its sultry beams;
 At noon I'd crown thee with the fairest flowers,
 At eve I'd lead thee to the safest bowers;

And

And when bleak winter howl'd around the cave,
 For thee his horrors and his storms I'd brave;
 Nor snows nor raging winds should damp my soul,
 Nor such a night as shrowds the dusky pole;
 O'er the dark waves my bounding skiff I'd guide,
 To pierce each mightier monster of the tide;
 Thro' frozen forests force my dreadful way,
 In their own dens to rouse the beasts of prey;
 Nor other blessing ask, if this might prove
 How fix'd my passion, and how fond my love.
 —Then should vain fortune to my sight display
 All that her anger now has snatch'd away;
 Treasures more vast than Av'rice e'er design'd
 In midnight visions to a Christian's mind;
 The Monarch's diadem, the Conqueror's meed,
 That empty prize for which the valiant bleed;
 All that ambition strives to snatch from fate,
 All that the Gods e'er lavish'd in their hate;
 Not these should win thy lover from thy arms,
 Or tempt a moment's absence from thy charms;

Indignant would I fly these guilty climes,

And scorn their glories as I hate their crimes!

But whither does my wand'ring fancy rove?

Hence ye wild wishes of desponding love!

—Ah! where is now that voice which lull'd my woes?

That Angel-face, which sooth'd me to repose?

By Nature tempted, and with passion blind,

Are these the joys Hope whisper'd to my mind?

Is this the end of constancy like thine,

Are these the transports of a love like mine?

My hopes, my joys, are vanish'd into air,

And now of all that once engag'd my care,

These chains alone remain, this weapon and despair.

---So be thy life's gay prospects all o'ercast,

All thy fond hopes dire disappointment blast!

Thus end thy golden visions, son of pride!

Whose ruthless ruffians tore me from my bride;

That

That beauteous prize Heav'n had reserv'd at last,
 Sweet recompence for all my sorrows past.
 O may thy harden'd bosom never prove
 The tender joys of friendship or of love !
 Yet may'st thou, doom'd to hopeless flames a prey,
 In unrequited passion pine away !
 May ev'ry transport violate thy rest,
 Which tears the jealous lover's gloomy breast !
 May secret anguish gnaw thy cruel heart,
 'Till death in all his terrors wing the dart ;
 Then to complete the horror of thy doom,
 A favour'd rival smile upon thy tomb !

Why does my ling'ring soul her flight delay ?
 Come, lovely maid, and gild the dreary way !
 Come, wildly rushing with disorder'd charms,
 And clasp thy bleeding lover in thy arms ;
 Close his sad eyes, receive his parting breath,
 And sooth him sinking to the shades of death !

O come

O come---thy presence can my pangs beguile,
 And bid th' inexorable tyrant smile;
 Transported will I languish on thy breast,
 And sink enraptur'd to eternal rest:
 The hate of men, the wrongs of fate forgive,
 Forget my woes, and almost wish to live.
 ---Ah! rather fly, lest ought of doubt controul
 The dreadful purpose lab'ring in my soul;
 Tears must not bend me, nor thy beauties move,
 This hour I triumph over fate and love.
 ---Again with tenfold rage my bosom burns,
 And all the tempest of my soul returns;
 Again the furies fire my madding brain,
 And death extends his shelt'ring arms in vain;
 For unreveng'd I fall, unpity'd die;
 And with my blood glut Pride's insatiate eye!
 Thou Christian God! to whom so late I bow'd,
 To whom my soul its new allegiance vow'd,

When

When crimes like these thy injur'd pow'r profane,
 O God of Nature ! art thou call'd in vain ?
 Did'st thou for this sustain a mortal wound,
 While Heav'n, and Earth, and Hell, hung trembling round ?
 That these vile fetters might my body bind,
 And agony like this distract my mind ?
 On thee I call'd with reverential awe,
 Ador'd thy wisdom, and embrac'd thy law ;
 Yet mark thy destin'd convert as he lies,
 His groans of anguish, and his livid eyes,
 These galling chains, polluted with his blood,
 Then bid his tongue proclaim thee just and good !
 But if too weak thy vaunted power to spare,
 Or suff'rings move thee not, O hear despair !
 Thy hopes and blessings I alike resign,
 But let revenge, let swift revenge be mine !
 Be this proud bark, which now triumphant rides,
 Toss'd by the winds, and shatter'd by the tides !
 And may these fiends, who now exulting view
 The horrors of my fortune, feel them too !
 Be theirs the torment of a ling'ring fate,
 Slow as thy justice, dreadful as my hate ;

Condemn'd to grasp the riven plank in vain,
And chac'd by all the monsters of the main;
And while they spread their sinking arms to thee,
Then let their fainting souls remember me!

---Thanks, righteous God!---Revenge shall yet be mine;
Yon flashing lightning gave the dreadful sign.
I see the flames of heav'nly anger hurl'd,
I hear your thunders shake a guilty world.
The time shall come, the fated hour is nigh,
When guileless blood shall penetrate the sky.
Amid these horrors, and involving night,
Prophetic visions flash before my sight;
Eternal justice wakes, and in their turn
The vanquish'd triumph, and the victors mourn:---
Lo! Discord, fiercest of th' infernal band,
Fires all her snakes, and waves her flaming brand;
No more proud Commerce courts the western gales,
But marks the lurid skies, and furls her sails;
War mounts his iron car, and at his wheels
In vain soft Pity weeps, and Mercy kneels;

He

He breaths a savage rage thro' all the host,
 And stains with kindred blood the impious coast;
 Then, while with horror sick'ning Nature groans,
 And earth and heav'n the monstrous race disowns,—
 Then the stern genius of my native land,
 With delegated vengeance in his hand,
 Shall raging cross the troubled seas, and pour
 The plagues of Hell on yon devoted shore.
 What tides of ruin mark his ruthless way!
 How shriek the fiends exulting o'er their prey!
 I see their warriors gasping on the ground,---
 I hear their flaming cities crash around,---
 In vain with trembling heart the coward turns,
 In vain with generous rage the valiant burns.---
 One common ruin, one promiscuous grave,
 O'erwhelms the dastard, and receives the brave—
 For Afric triumphs!--his avenging rage
 No tears can soften, and no blood assuage.
 He smites the trembling waves, and at the shock
 Their fleets are dash'd upon the pointed rock.
 He waves his flaming dart, and o'er their plains,
 In mournful silence, desolation reigns---

Fly swift ye years!---Arise thou glorious morn!

Thou great avenger of thy race be born!

The conq'ror's palm and deathless fame be thine!

One gen'rous stroke, and liberty be mine!

---And now, ye pow'rs! to whom the brave are dear,

Receive me falling, and your suppliant hear.

To you this unpoluted blood I pour,

To you that spirit which ye gave restore!

I ask no lazy pleasures to possess,

No long eternity of happiness;---

But if unstain'd by voluntary guilt,

At your great call this being I have spilt,

For all the wrongs which innocent I share,

For all I've suffer'd, and for all I dare;

O lead me to that spot, that sacred shore,

Where souls are free, and men oppress no more!

THE END.